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a monthly bulletin from Canadian Hydrographic Service

About the monthly Water Level bulletin

November Precipitation Over the Great Lakes

As a percentage of the long-term November average:

Great Lakes Basin	109%
Lake Erie (including Lake St. Clair)	119%
Lake Superior	124%
Lakes Michigan-Huron	104%

Volume 9, Number 12 **December 7, 2001**

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November Precipitation Helps Slow Seasonal Decline

Unseasonably mild weather was experienced throughout much of the Great Lakes region during November. The region's first major snowstorm of the season occurred during the last week of the month. The storm brought snow to the northern portion of the basin and was accompanied by rain and freezing rain over parts of eastern Ontario and western Quebec.

As was the case during October, rainfall received during November helped slow the seasonal decline in the water levels of the Great Lakes. While all the lakes remain below average, the current water levels on Lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron are noticeably higher than levels recorded one year ago. The regional rainfall and in particular high flows from the Ottawa River eased the low water level problems for navigation and other users in the Montréal region of the St.Lawrence River.

The monthly mean level of Lake Superior declined by just 1 cm from October to November. The lake began December 17 cm below its long-term average, but about 18cm above its level of one year ago.

The monthly mean level of Lakes Michigan-Huron increased by 2cm from October to November instead of declining as it usually does. At the beginning of December, the level of Lakes Michigan-Huron was 35cm below average, but 21 cm higher than one year ago. Notable is the fact that water levels on Lakes Michigan-Huron were 55 cm below average as recently as the beginning of September.

Water levels on Lakes St.Clair, Erie and Ontario all declined by less than average from October to November falling just 3, 1, and 5cm, respectively. At the beginning of December, LakesSt. Clair, Erie and Ontario were 10, 16, and 3cm below average, respectively.

Montréal Harbour's monthly mean water level was 5.78m in November, 74cm below the 1967-2000 period-of-record average for the month. Except for two days, levels at Montréal in November were higher than the chart datum elevation of 5.55 m.

Lake Ontario 91%

Note: These figures are preliminary.

November Outflows From the Great Lakes

As a percentage of the long-term November average:

Lake Superior 77%

Lake Erie 89%

Lake Huron 91%

Lake Ontario 87%

Note: These figures are preliminary.

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Summary information for "LEVEL*news*"

Water Level Advisory

Water levels on Lakes Superior, Michigan-Huron, St. Clair and Erie are well below their all-time averages for this time of year. Lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron are at levels slightly above the level of Chart Datum. Lake Ontario is slightly below its all-time average for this time of year. The water level at Montreal Harbour on the St. Lawrence River is well below its all-time average for this time of year but is above the level of Chart Datum. **Mariners should exercise extreme caution throughout the entire system, especially during periods of strong winds when water levels can rise or fall significantly in a short period of time.**

Lake Superior Outflow Regulation

Reflecting an increase in water supplies to the upper lakes during November, Regulation Plan 1977-A has specified a small increase in the Lake Superior outflow for December.

The IJC's Upper Great Lakes Plan of Study Team has completed its public meetings on the proposed study to improve Lake Superior outflow regulation. The meetings were well attended by citizens and representatives of interest groups. The team is currently incorporating public comments and inputs, and is expected to submit its draft plan of study to the IJC in January 2002.

Lake Ontario Outflow Regulation

With improved water level conditions in the Montréal region during November, Lake Ontario outflows greater than specified by the regulation plan were no longer necessary. Since early November, the daily outflows have been either at, or slightly less than those specified by the regulation plan. At the end of November all previous under-discharges have amounted to 2.6 cm of water being conserved on Lake Ontario.

As in recent years, Seaway navigation this year on the Great Lakes and the St.Lawrence River is expected to end sometime around Christmas. Water temperatures in the upper St.Lawrence River in late November were slightly higher than the average recorded over the past 10 years. If needed, short-term adjustments in the Lake Ontario outflow will be made to help facilitate the proper formation of ice cover in the St. Lawrence River.

CHS Web Site Back On-line

The Canadian Hydrographic Service Tides and Water Levels Web Site is now back on-line. The web site can also be accessed through the OUR GREAT LAKES page.

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Last Updated: 2001-12-11
Last Reviewed: 2001-12-11
URL: http://www.on.ec.gc.ca/water/level-news/ln200112_e.html?CFID=15211176&CFTOKEN=97130256